

**The Claims**

1. (Currently Amended) A system for customized intelligent contact routing ~~system, the system~~ comprising:

an intelligent contact manager that is centralized with respect to a plurality of call centers; and

a classification engine that is centralized with respect to the call centers, the classification engine being coupled to ~~coupled with~~ the intelligent contact manager and being operable to apply one or more classification rules to a contact to classify the contact for handling at one of the call centers;

~~wherein the classification engine is operable to determine a classification to be used in handling a contact by applying a set of classification rules; and~~

~~wherein the intelligent contact manager is being operable to select an appropriate service and an appropriate target for the contact at one of the call centers based upon the classification determined by the classification engine according to the classification of the contact by the classification engine.~~

2. (Original) The system of Claim 1, wherein the classification is selected from a list of predetermined classifications.

3. (Original) The system of Claim 1, wherein the classification corresponds to a call type.

4. (Original) The system of Claim 1, further comprising:  
a client query interface operable to receive a request for classification from a customer contact client, query the classification engine for the classification, and return the classification to the customer contact client.

5. (Original) The system of Claim 1, further comprising:  
a classification database operable to store data used by the classification engine to determine the classification.

6. (Original) The system of Claim 5, wherein the data comprises pre-processed lists of accounts that meet predetermined candidate criteria.

7. (Original) The system of Claim 5, wherein the classification database is operable to be updated in real-time.

8. (Original) The system of Claim 5, wherein the classification database is operable to be updated in batch-style loads.

9. (Original) The system of Claim 5, further comprising:  
a restricted development environment operable to update selected aspects of the classification database and classification rules.

10. (Original) The system of Claim 5, further comprising:  
an unrestricted development environment operable to update all aspects of the classification database and classification rules.

11. (Original) The system of Claim 1, further comprising:  
a back end database operable to store information about customers and accounts.

12. (Currently Amended) A method for customized intelligent contact routing, the method comprising:

receiving, at a classification engine that is centralized with respect to a plurality of call centers, a request from a customer contact client for classification of a contact;

applying, at the classification engine, ~~a predetermined set of one or more~~ classification rules to ~~data known about the contact to determine a classification for the contact~~ classify the contact for handling at one of the call centers; and

~~returning~~ communicating the classification from the classification engine to the customer contact client.

13. (Original) The method of Claim 12, further comprising:  
querying a classification database for data known about the contact; and  
receiving, from the classification database, data known about the contact.

14. (Original) The method of Claim 12, further comprising:  
querying a back end database for data known about the contact; and  
receiving, from the back end database, data known about the contact.

15. (Currently Amended) A method of ~~for~~ customized intelligent contact routing,  
the method comprising:  
~~assigning a classification to a contact at a classification engine;~~  
receiving, at an intelligent contact manager that is centralized with respect to a  
plurality of call centers, a classification of a contact for handling the contact at one of the call  
centers;  
~~selecting, at the intelligent contact manager, a service to provide to the contact based~~  
~~upon~~ according to the classification;  
~~targeting, at the intelligent contact manager, a service node at one of the call centers~~  
to provide the selected service to the contact; and  
~~delivering, at the targeted service node, the selected service to the contact at the~~  
~~targeted service node.~~

16. (Original) The method of Claim 15, wherein selecting a service to provide  
to the contact based upon the classification is performed by an intelligent contact manager.

17. (Original) The method of Claim 15, wherein targeting a service node to  
provide the selected service to the contact is performed by an intelligent contact manager.

18. (Original) The method of Claim 15, wherein the classification is based  
upon a customer account status.

19. (Original) The method of Claim 15, wherein the classification is based upon customer account information.

20. (Original) The method of Claim 15, wherein the classification is based upon a previous customer transaction.

21. (Original) The method of Claim 15, wherein the classification is based upon a call type.

22. (New) The system of Claim 1, wherein one or more of the classification rules each comprise one or more of:  
one or more nested rules;  
one or more modular code constructs; and  
one or more flexible code constructs.

23. (New) The system of Claim 22, wherein one or more of the nested rules, the modular code constructs, and the flexible code constructs facilitate customization of the classification rules according to one or more particular needs of a user.

24. (New) The system of Claim 1, wherein the classification rules facilitate classification of the contact for handling according to one or more of one or more modular code constructs and one or more flexible code constructs.

25. (New) The method of Claim 12, wherein the customer contact client is an intelligent contact manager that is centralized with respect to the call centers.

26. (New) The method of Claim 12, wherein one or more of the classification rules each comprise one or more of:  
one or more nested rules;  
one or more modular code constructs; and  
one or more flexible code constructs.

27. (New) The method of Claim 26, wherein one or more of the nested rules, the modular code constructs, and the flexible code constructs facilitate customization of the classification rules according to one or more particular needs of a user.

28. (New) The method of Claim 12, wherein the classification rules facilitate classification of the contact for handling according to one or more of one or more modular code constructs and one or more flexible code constructs.